

HIGHLIGHTS

April 2002

CYS / Project Together Newsletter Vol. XVII, No. 4

For Your Information...

Mentors, children, youth and teenagers: Be ready for a big day exploring the ocean world with the upcoming Ahoy Mates outing on Sunday, April 7, at the Ocean Institute. Make your reservations now! Everyone meets at 11 a.m. in front of the Ocean Institute, 24200 Dana Point Harbor Dr., Dana Point. Children, teenagers and mentors too will have an opportunity to touch a star fish and other marine life, step back a century or two in time and visit with the crew dressed in costume on the tall ship "Pilgrim." This is a special CYS-Project Together free outing that allows mentors to meet fellow mentors and for the youth to socialize...

Southern California spring is upon us and those of us in Orange County may boast of several fun traditions. Be on the lookout for the many festivals, which provide free entertainment as well as learning experiences. Fly a kite at one of the many kite festivals, usually at the beach cities; or one of the three strawberry festivals; the countless numbers of art shows and festivals featuring local artists as well as opportunities for children and teenagers to do hands-on experimentation with various media. You may check the local newspapers, the web or the calendar in *Highlights*...

April is national Volunteer Month. Thank you to all of those who have taken time out of their lives to give part of themselves to help others in their community. Volunteering is a tradition that is unique to America and makes our communities strong. Volunteers do work that is priceless because it is from their hearts...

Therapist Spotlight

Alisa Huntington Knew Her Calling

*By Ken Cornwell
Volunteer Coordinator
Aspen/Tustin*

Alisa Huntington, M.A., M.F.T., therapist at Aspen Community Services/Costa Mesa Clinic, knew exactly what she wanted when she was 13. She wanted to be a therapist.

She set her professional life goal then and planned her experiences carefully. However, it has been the unexpected occurrences that have fine-tuned her current role of serving children and teenagers. "I knew I wanted to be a therapist when I was 13 and never questioned it," says Alisa. She received her Masters in Marriage & Family Therapy in 1997 from Pepperdine in Irvine and completed her internship at Mariposa Women's Center in Orange.

"I started out working with adults and gained experience working with children through chance assignments with foster care homes," says Alisa. "That experience led me here to Aspen, where I have been for two years." She has rotated from Aspen's Hawaiian Gardens office, to Santa Ana and now is in Costa Mesa. "It's perfect because I believe, as a philosophy, in working with the whole family, especially when treating children, in order for therapy to work." This way I get to work with both the parents and the kids," she said.

"My primary reason for utilizing mentors (from the CYS-Project Together program) is to provide a role model when the kid needs one, particularly when there is only one parent in the home. The mentor helps to balance out the custodial parent." Addi-



tionally if the child or teenager is having social problems or is isolated, the mentor serves as a role model and makes it possible for the youngster to get out of the house, says Alisa.

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Annual Volunteer Dinner Slated April 24

The CYS-Project Together staff will honor how "Volunteers Help Children Soar" at the annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner slated for 6 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, April 24, at the UCI University Club on the campus of University of California at Irvine.

All mentors serving Children and Youth Services clients through CYS-Project Together and program volunteers will be recognized for their service to the County of Orange and the clients of CYS. This is an opportunity for volunteers to meet each other, as well as share their experiences, strategies and successes.

Mark your calendars and keep watch for your invitation and map.

Volunteers Are Special!

Art Montes Shares Experience That Helps Troubled Teenager

By Jonathan Schiesel
Volunteer Coordinator
South Region/Costa Mesa

Art Montes, a mentor with the CYS-Project Together Program since July 2000, has been matched with an adolescent male, who according to the therapist, was isolated, socially aggressive and was experiencing Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The child was also confused due to his inability to integrate his sense of self because his mother is of one minority group and his father, who is no longer in contact with the family, is of another.

The identity conflict and the feelings of inadequacy drove the boy to a state of depression and an increasingly aggressive behavior at school. As his home life was so often disturbed by the family dynamics, he was unable to apply himself academically and so he had fallen behind his peers and felt largely overwhelmed.

It was at this point that Art entered his life through a timely referral by the boy's therapist to CYS-Project Together program. According to the therapist, she knew that to be effective with the client would require the additional support of a mentor. The challenge was to find a male mentor who could relate to the teenager's situation.

Art is intimately aware of the feelings of a young teenage male caught up in the difficulties of being a minority, having to struggle economically, and being raised in an environment where the challenges are many. Art grew up in such an environment and had pooled his internal resources to forgive those who hurt him as a youth, and to find meaning and purpose in the values of an inner strength that comes from directing one's self to live a life of compassion, unconditional acceptance, and integrity.

With these values in place, Art took the CYS-Project Together training program that covered all aspects of the



mentoring process. He explored with enthusiasm the training components on empathetic listening,

awareness of how people differ in their ability to process life's experiences, subtle issues of self-esteem, the value of planning and evaluating one's mentor experience and the valuable role the mentor plays as part of the therapeutic team in setting goals to help the charge achieve a sense of personal worth.

The adolescent responded quickly to Art's demeanor and within a few visits, he saw that Art was a safe, caring and strong male who was committed to having their time together be a meaningful experience. Art established a rapport that would support a healthy, healing and empowering relationship between a teenage boy and a male role model.

Art actively seeks support from the child's therapist and the Volunteer Coordinator. They meet frequently to review the child's progress and discuss how to apply what Art has learned during his training to help the teen deal with his home life situation and behavior at school. Art integrated the strategies and methods recommended and coupled this with his excellent sense of empathy. He was able to guide the mentee to an increasing awareness that his feelings were legitimate. His efforts resulted in a complete turn around in the mentee's development and began a new chapter in his drive for appropriate personal control and direction in his life.

As a result, the youth has started to develop healthy peer relationships,

an increased sense of his personal strengths and the ability to recognize the value of overcoming resentment. Now the youth serves as Art's assistant when he conducts church youth group activities. With this newfound experience of meaningful social interaction, the boy has found that he has a great deal to offer the world when he allows himself to be guided by the respectful interest of those who have reached out to him.

Art, thank you for coming into this young man's life. It has changed his future.

Therapist Spotlight

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"Mentors also help the kid to open up in therapy," she said. He or she is "able to learn to trust an adult in a more relaxed setting and this carries over into therapy." Because of their positive relationship with the mentors, they are willing to take the chance and trust another adult, the therapist, she said. Alisa continues, "Mentors make a huge difference. A good placement really adds a lot to the therapeutic process."

"I keep in touch with all of my mentors. Because they have a different relationship with the child than I do, they sometimes get more out of the client and provide me with important information that otherwise would not be evident in therapy," she said. "This makes the therapeutic process more effective."

Alisa will be the first to say, "The kids educate me. I ask them to bring in their favorite music and tell me about their clothes. I try to stay connected to the 'current scene.' Hopefully, we teach each other. The teen culture has many challenges we never had to face and forces choices we never had to make," she said.

Alisa's biggest challenge as a therapist is dealing with the every day surprises and unpredictability that her clients offer. Her greatest joy is to see people change slowly over time and to appreciate the progress they have made.

APRIL 2002

Calendar of Events

The CYS-Project Together Calendar is a collection of affordable, fun, wholesome and interesting events that can be enjoyed by children, teens and adults. To submit an item for the calendar, please call (714)796-0100.

Sunday, April 7 Ahoy Mates

Mentor/Match Outing
Ocean Institute
Dana Point Harbor
24200 Dana Point Harbor Dr.
Dana Point
(714)796-0100

This outing is for CYS-Project Together mentors and their matches only and includes lunch, tour of the historic sailing ship, "Pilgrim", and a visit to the Ocean Institute Lab, where participants will have an opportunity to touch star fish and other marine life. Reservations are required.

Time: 11 a.m. Meet in front
of Ocean Institute

Cost: Free

Saturday, April 13 Spring Egg Hunt

Tustin Sports Park
12850 Robinson St.
Tustin
(714)573-3328

There will be four age groups for the egg hunt. Kids will also enjoy the characters in costume and entertainment after the hunt.

Time: 10 a.m.

Cost: Free

Saturday, April 20 Beach Clean Up

San Clemente Beach
North Side of Pier
San Clemente

Participants will receive T-shirt and literature.

Time: 8 a.m.-Noon

Cost: Free

Saturday, April 27

Artists' Village Street Fair

Second Street between Main
and Broadway
Santa Ana
(714)571-4229
(714)542-6579

You will encounter the worlds of fashion, critters, outer space, sound and culture. There will be hands-on art experiences for any age and ongoing display of talent.

Time: 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

Cost: Free

Saturday, April 27

Annual Special Arts Festival

Main Place
2800 N. Main St.
Santa Ana
(714)547-7000

This festival celebrates the artistic accomplishments of individuals with disabilities through visual arts and performances in dance, music and theater. Students from all schools throughout Orange County may participate in the workshops.

Time: 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

Cost: Free

Sunday, April 28

Free to Breathe Kite Festival

Huntington Beach Pier Plaza
At Main and Pacific Coast Hwy.
Huntington Beach
(714)835-5864

This is the second annual Free to Breathe Kite Festival, sponsored by the American Lung Association of Orange County. This is a fun-filled day featuring free kites for the kids, professional kite-flying, a poster/poetry contest and a candy drop from the sky. The aim is to raise awareness of how pollution affects the lungs and how members of the community may participate in cleaning the air. Kite maker Ron Gibian will fill the sky with his unique creations and youth may participate in the amateur kite competitions.

Time: 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

Cost: Free

There's More than One Way to Hug A Child...

The staff and clients of Children & Youth Services (CYS) and CYS-Project Together deeply appreciate the wonderful support provided by many local businesses and organizations. Your generosity allows community resources to become an important asset in the therapeutic process for the children we serve. Each month, we extend our thanks and give recognition to our caring donors.

Adventure City
Stanton

Albertsons
Boise, Idaho

**Baskin
Robbins, Inc.**
Anaheim

El Torito Grill
Brea

**El Torito
Restaurants**
Brea

ESPN Zone
Anaheim

Family Fun Center
Anaheim

Irvine Lanes
Irvine

Island Fine Burgers
Orange

Laser Quest
Fullerton

LA Fitness
Fountain Valley

LensCrafters
Anaheim

**Mighty Ducks
of Anaheim**
Anaheim

Ralphs
Walnut

Rubio's Baja Grill
Carlsbad

Ruby's Diner
Newport

Bill Sauter
Balboa Island

Statek Corp.
Orange

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Tim Smith	4/1
Heather Physioc	4/4
Pat Lucas	4/6
Donna Goodman	4/7
Lonnie Pham	4/7
Antonia Soria	4/7
Brenda Calvillo	4/9
Deirdre Kelly	4/11
Michael Khoo	4/18
Ruth Adams	4/19
Chooi Ang	4/19
Kristine Newton	4/20
Ozgun Turner	4/29
Stephanie Illes	4/30



THANKS TO THOSE WHO'VE MOVED ON

South/Costa Mesa	Liza Camba Ann Hanson Sotoko Shikata
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The Health Care Agency/Behavioral Health Services/Children and Youth Services provides mental health treatment for emotionally and behaviorally disturbed youth and their families throughout Orange County. CYS-Project Together is a volunteer mentor program for CYS children and teens. The program also offers supportive resources to clients and families to assist them in achieving treatment goals.



County of Orange Health Care Agency
Behavioral Health Services/Children & Youth Services

CYS-Project Together *Highlights*

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Address Correction Requested